

Developing and Marketing A Women's Health Web Site

*HealthyMe.md seeks to provide
personalized health care over the Internet.*

By Robert Thompson

In July 2000, HealthyMe.md announced the launch of a new Web site devoted to women's health and the practitioners that provide health services to women. The mission of HealthyMe.md is to improve the health of patients by utilizing the Internet to strengthen the physician/patient relationship. In doing this, HealthyMe.md set out to become an Internet destination created to satisfy patient need for online health care information by doing it through the patient's personal physician rather than an anonymous electronic source. At the same time, HealthyMe.md was expected to satisfy the physician's desire for an Internet presence that benefits their practice and provides a set of unique services for their patients.

The HealthyMe.md business model is based on the use of the Internet as a promotional, patient-education and demand-management tool for private medical practices and hospitals. In effect, the site represents an "application service provider" model that involves the brokering of information and Web site hosting for physician practices. While the company will eventually provide services in the areas of pediatrics, family medicine, and other specialties outside primary care, the initial service focuses on women's health.

HealthyMe.md's content features useful information and services such as daily

health news, bulletin boards, a medical glossary, a drug database, and information on nutrition, exercise, weight loss, and preventive health care. HealthyMe.md offers some 600 pages of content organized into commonly referenced categories with all medical content peer-reviewed by a nationally recognized health advisory board to ensure accuracy. A powerful search engine makes finding specific information quick and easy.

HealthyMe.md represents a unique Web service in its approach to strengthening the physician/patient relationship. Rather than promoting the parent site, HealthyMe.md wants to reach the women's market through their physicians. While some of the content is standard and available to any participant, the key is in customizing the site to meet the needs of specific OB/GYNs and their patients. These sites provide hundreds of pages of medical information covering every aspect of women's health, including preventive care, disease symptoms and treatments, prescription drug information, mental health, nutrition, and exercise. The front end of each site is customizable by the individual physician, physician practice group, or hospital to include practice-specific information and e-mail newsletter capabilities for communicating directly with patients.

As a practicing OB/GYN, HealthyMe.md founder Thomas G. Sto-

vall knew first-hand the difficulties doctors faced when trying to keep in close contact with patients in a time-efficient manner. Stovall, who holds both MD and MBA degrees, realized that physicians responding to routine inquiries invested much time in order to do so, and patients hungry for more information often ended up getting it from questionable sources. In addition, doctors were often too busy to utilize the Web as the effective marketing tool it can be. Knowing that women prefer to get health information from their personal physician, and that 47% of women who use the Internet use it to find health information, Stovall decided to come up with a way to satisfy the needs of both doctors and patients. Research with physicians, nurses, and patients followed, and in 1999 HealthyMe.md was founded with a simple mission: Improve the health of patients by increasing the flow of information between doctor and patient utilizing the Internet.

Stovall's findings were supported by market research (conducted by Georgetown University Medical School's department of obstetrics and gynecology in association with HealthyMe.md) on women age 25-49 that found an increased use of the Internet by most women for health care purposes, with about 73% of women using the Internet to find health information. Seventy-three

percent of women in the survey also said they would prefer to receive health information from either their physician's Web site or one belonging to a medical society rather than a commercial site (e.g., WebMD.com, DrKoop.com). In addition, 48% of women surveyed wanted the ability to schedule physician appointments online while 40% wanted the ability to communicate via e-mail with the doctor's office. Women also responded strongly to other Web-based services such as daily health news briefings, product safety recalls, and electronic medical newsletters delivered from their doctor's office.

The customizable front end of the sites at participating practices includes a Web site that provides a direct link between

doctor and patient. Physician, physician practice groups or hospital clients can create their own site with general practice information such as office hours and location, affiliated hospitals, and health plans. Patients also can receive an e-mail newsletter directly from their personal physician with health information and practice updates.

The service affords doctors crucial time management capabilities, as well as a means to increase communications with their patients and a tool for marketing their services. HealthyMe.md also allows women to play a more active role in achieving and maintaining their own health, and provides a means for women and their doctors to become partners in achieving the best health possible.

Increased communication between doctor and patient, leading to a strong doctor/patient relationship and ultimately a healthier patient, is the HealthyMe.md equation. An added plus for participating physicians has been the improved ability to manage calls into the office. By sending patients to the Web site, the office can more efficiently manage many of the routine calls they receive on daily basis.

HealthyMe.md was initially funded with \$3 million raised from the company's board of directors and local investors mostly in the Memphis, Tenn. area. The company will be entering its second round of financing in the fall and anticipates that it will generate additional revenue from its strategic partners, including pharmaceutical companies and

HealthyMe.md

Today's Link For A Healthier You

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

- HealthyWomen
- HealthyFamily
- Retail Therapy
- HealthyTalk
- Ask The Doctor
- Home
- HealthyMom login



A HealthyLife For Women and their families!

HealthyMe.md Newsletter

enter your e-mail address

IT'S FREE GO

Register Your Practice!
Create a customized website for your practice. Share the latest medical news & videos with your patients.
 Click here to learn more!

your health

- Pregnancy Timelining:** Week-by-week progress.
- Videos:** Women's health issues addressed by medical experts.
- Women's Health:** Medical information from leading U.S. doctors. From general gynecology to specific disorders.
- Drug Database:** Have a question about that prescription? Find information about your medications with our easy to use database. Select the drug name to view helpful information, including photos.
- Medical Terms:** Hundreds of medical terms clearly defined.
- Discussion Groups:** Have a thought or question you would like to share?
- Living Well:** Move toward achieving better health and an active mind.
- Baby Names Database:** A database of baby names and their meanings. Check out your favorites.
- HealthyMom Club:** Create a personalized web page with pregnancy information, photos, and more.

Today's Health News

Exercise Benefits Patients with Type 2 Diabetes
 An estimated 18 million Americans suffer from type 2 diabetes, a disorder whose long-term complications include heart disease, blindness and kidney failure. Yet few patients use exercise as a way to control their symptoms and lower their risk of developing serious complications. [...more](#)

Autoimmune Disorders Among Top 10 Killers of Women
 Autoimmune disorders such as multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and type 1 diabetes are among the leading causes of death among American women under age 65, according to Connecticut researchers. [...more](#)

Menopause Symptoms Differ by Race
 Symptoms of menopause seem to vary depending on ethnicity, socioeconomic factors and lifestyle, a new study has found. [...more](#)

Health News Archive
[...more](#)

Save News and Health

CPSC Reports as Scooter Sales Skyrocket, Injuries Soar
 Emergency room-treated injuries related to popular lightweight scooters have increased 700 percent since May. [...more](#)



ask the doctor
 Dr. Anand answers your women's health questions!



medical device manufacturers. HealthyMe.md has several sources of revenue: Web site hosting, e-commerce, advertising, sponsorships, direct mail services, site upgrades, and market research and surveys. The company began generating revenue in July of 2000 and expects to be profitable by the third quarter of 2001.

The potential market for HealthyMe.md services is large, with more than 35,000 OB/GYNs alone practicing in the United States. Currently, there are more than 200 physicians throughout the United States participating. The program has not been difficult to sell, especially with physicians concerned that their patients are obtaining inaccurate information from unregulated

Web sites. Plus, the cost of the service is perceived as reasonable. There are no setup charges and monthly fees begin at \$25 with a maximum charge of \$79.95 for a practice with three or more physicians. In addition to the site itself, participating practices receive marketing and other support services for their monthly subscription fee.

The marketing approaches utilized by HealthyMe.md to reach prospective OB/GYN practices capitalize on its electronic nature. Although traditional promotional approaches play a role, e-mailed announcements have been an effective means of reaching the target audience of OB/GYNs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Thompson is vice president of marketing and a founder of Memphis-based HealthyMe.md. His experience in Internet and digital multimedia includes e-commerce development, brand development and extension, direct marketing, market research, and strategic planning. Prior to starting HealthyMe.md, Thompson established and developed Health Communications-Interactive, the first interactive division of Health Communications. He was also the founding president of a Memphis-based Internet consulting and design firm.



HealthyMe.md features the following sections geared toward women's health care needs:

HealthyWomen

- The features of HealthyWomen are designed to give women all the information they need to feel their best. The **Pregnancy Timeline** shows week-by-week illustrations and ultrasound images that help expectant mothers visualize the changes to their body and the development of their baby.
- Streaming **Videos** of presentations given by leading physicians covering a wide range of topics from depression to pregnancy are offered, with new selections each week.
- In the Women's **Health** section, women can find articles written in clear, simple language to help them better understand and manage their health.
- Hundreds of medical and health terms are defined using non-technical language in the **Medical Terms** portion of the site.

- Users can search or select from an alphabetized list to find detailed information on thousands of medications in HealthyMe.md's **Drug Data Base**.
- The **HealthyMoms Club** provides fun and helpful support for the expectant mother, including an *online gift registry*, an *e-mail birth announcement* feature, and newborn photo posting.

HealthyFamily

- This section provides advice and information for fathers, children, and grandparents as a new life is brought into the family.

- **For Dad** answers questions on pregnancy from a man's perspective and helps new fathers learn what to expect.
- **For Kids** explores what happens when a new brother or sister comes home for the first time and how best to help children adapt to this major change in their lives.
- **For Grandparents** offers tips to help grandparents get the most out of their relationship with their grandchildren.
- **For Pets** offers guidance on finding appropriate pets, making sure children are safe, and how to care for and train these family members.

HealthyLife

- The goal of **HealthyLife** is to help women and their families stay healthy and feel their best.
- **Food for Thought** offers important information on healthy eating for adults and children, including eating right.
- Exercise is the focus of **Use It or Lose It**, where users will learn how to incorporate a healthy exercise plan into their daily lives.
- **Staying Well** helps women and their families do just that with preventative health care information and advice on how to work more effectively with their health care provider.